

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **WOODLAWN SCHOOL**

West Monkseaton, Whitley Bay

LEA area: North Tyneside

Unique reference number: 108652

Headteacher: Mr B Hickman

Lead inspector: Alastair Younger

Dates of inspection: 9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> May 2005

Inspection number: 268675

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Foundation special
Age range of pupils:	2-16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	69.5
School address:	Langley Avenue West Monkseaton Whitley Bay Tyne and Wear
Postcode:	NE25 9DF
Telephone number:	0191 2008729
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr Jacqui Rogers
Date of previous inspection:	9/11/1998

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Woodlawn is a school for up to 96 boys and girls between the ages of 2 and 16 who have a wide variety of physical difficulties. These include speech and communication, sensory impairment and medical needs. Many pupils also have moderate learning difficulties and a growing number are on the autism spectrum. Most pupils have statements of special educational need and the remainder are undergoing assessment. All pupils are white and British; there are no asylum seekers, travellers or refugees. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. A few pupils are looked after by the local authority. Pupils are drawn from a wide area, including county Durham and Northumberland. Their difficulties do not relate to socio-economic factors and they come from a wide range of family backgrounds. Attainment on entry is usually very low.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23587	Alastair Younger	Lead inspector	Science, art and design, music.
9511	Ann Longfield	Lay inspector	
19386	Trevor Watts	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, design and technology, geography, history.
23390	Mel Blackband	Team inspector	Mathematics, citizenship, religious education, personal, social and health education
27429	Margaret Smith	Team inspector	English, information and communication technology, French, special educational needs, English as an additional language.

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a good school with some excellent features. It gives good value for money.** Most importantly, it is very effective in helping pupils to communicate and this is helping them to achieve well. Good, skilled, teaching and effective leadership and management contribute significantly towards this. The pupils are a delight, showing great determination to overcome their disabilities and gain more independence.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The expert use of technological aids by staff opens up many new opportunities for pupils to learn and develop
- There is a very strong commitment from pupils to make the best possible use of their time in school
- Very high quality of care, support and guidance is offered to pupils; this reassures them and ensures that they are taught in a safe and happy environment
- Systems to monitor the relative progress of different groups of pupils are underdeveloped

There has been good improvement over the last six years. Issues for improvement identified by the last inspection have been addressed; very well in the case of making better use of information and communication technology across the whole curriculum and well in improving the range of extra-curricular activities. Improvement does not stop at this; the school has set itself the goal of excelling in the use of communication aids and has succeeded exceptionally well in doing so.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement at the end of:	in relation to individual targets in:*	
	Subjects of the curriculum	personal and social education
Year 2	<b>good</b>	<b>Very good</b>
Year 6	<b>good</b>	<b>Very good</b>
Year 9	<b>good</b>	<b>Very good</b>
Year 11	<b>good</b>	<b>Very good</b>

*Inspectors make judgements in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor.*

*\*The school's present system for measuring achievement in relation to individual targets is not sufficiently developed to inform these judgements. The judgements are therefore those of the inspection team, based on first hand evidence.*

**Achievement is good for all pupils.** A pattern has emerged, in recent years, of the school admitting children with increasingly severe and complex disabilities into the Foundation Stage. These children are in the earliest stages of learning and personal development but they achieve very well in relation to the goals they are set. Transfer to Year 1 is smooth and very well planned for, with the result that good achievement is not interrupted and this continues right through the school until pupils leave. Inspectors noted no differences in the achievement of any group of pupils. This is because the individual needs of all individuals are very well met and obstacles to learning are reduced to a minimum, allowing pupils to achieve very well in English and information and communication technology and well in mathematics, science and personal, social and health education. The one subject area where achievement is weak is art and design for secondary aged pupils.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are excellent.** As a result, there is an excellent ethos for learning. Pupils demonstrate a huge desire to try their hardest, not only in learning but also in their fierce determination to overcome their disabilities. Even those pupils with the least mobility take great pride in getting around the school

with as much independence as possible. Behaviour is excellent. There is little need for external control because the desire to behave well is so ingrained in most pupils as a result of their excellent moral development. As a result the school has a happy buzz about it and pupils can learn and socialise in a calm, happy atmosphere free of threat. Consideration for others is excellent. Pupils are extremely sensitive to each other's needs and develop an excellent understanding of the beliefs and values of people from different societies around the world. Pupils attend whenever they can. There are frequent absences for legitimate reasons, such as hospitalisation but there is no unauthorised absence.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching is good.** Teachers are acutely aware of the importance of promoting pupils' basic skills in numeracy, literacy and information and communication technology in all lessons, not only in those lessons where these are the main focus of teaching and learning. Teachers and support staff are extremely skilled in making use of equipment which opens up new opportunities for pupils to communicate and which facilitate their learning and comfort. There is very little difference in the quality of teaching for different age groups. The teaching of English is particularly strong throughout the school; mainly because of the way it promotes communication and expression. Teaching and learning in mathematics and science is good for all groups of pupils. Assessment in the main subjects of the curriculum is good but it is less well developed in several minor subjects. The good curriculum includes all of the subjects of the National Curriculum and balances them well with religious education and a good programme of personal, health, social and citizenship education. Excellent relationships between adults and pupils contribute strongly to the care, guidance and support of pupils, who know that their views are valued and taken account of when important decisions about their futures are being made. The school has a high standing in the community, contributing, as well as benefiting, from its strong links. Many, highly effective links have been made with local schools to the considerable benefit of each party.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership is very good and governance and management are good.** The strong leadership of the headteacher has contributed significantly to the development of a happy, effective school, where staff enjoy working, pupils enjoy learning and which is widely respected in the community. Senior staff set a good example through their professionalism and commitment. Governors bring valuable strengths to the management of the school. They are proud of their school and act as a good moderating influence. A very good cycle of self-review, closely linked to performance management is in place but at a time when school self-evaluation is becoming ever more important, the monitoring and analysis of pupil's progress remains relatively unsophisticated.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Most parents have nothing but praise for the school. A very small minority have voiced minor criticisms but having followed up the background to these concerns, inspectors agree with the majority. It is very clear from pupils' attitudes and behaviour that they love coming to school. All the pupils that inspectors talked to confirmed this.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- Devise better ways of gathering, presenting and analysing facts about pupils' progress so that they can be put to better use in school self-evaluation and reassuring parents.
- Improve art provision for secondary age pupils.

(both of these have already been identified by the school and included in the current school improvement plan)

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses**

Achievement is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Most pupils leave with qualifications that reflect their good achievement.
- There is no whole school system for monitoring pupils' achievement against individual targets.
- Achievement is very good in English and information and communication technology, but not good enough in art and design in Years 7 to 11.

#### **Commentary**

1. Most pupils enter the school at a level of attainment and personal development that is borderline between reflecting severe and moderate learning difficulties. Pupils make quick progress because of good teaching and their determination to learn. Occasionally, individual pupils pass GCSE examinations. A couple of years ago one boy passed English and two pupils passed GCSE mathematics, all at grades in the D to F range. These are isolated instances; more normally, higher attaining pupils are gaining Entry Level qualifications. Last year, the five candidates gained three passes in English, four in French, four in mathematics and five in science; most of these passes are at Level 3 but a few are at Level 2. Many Year 11 pupils also gain Unit Awards in recognition of their achievements in subjects as varied as drama, geography, history, food technology and reading for pleasure. Pupils with the greatest degree of learning difficulty have their good progress recognised by the award of credits in Key Skills Units in disciplines such as 'Improving your own Learning', 'Working With Others' and 'Problem Solving'

2. Termly targets are closely linked to those in pupils' statements of special educational need. There are usually five or six of these targets and success in relation to them is reviewed by staff and parents. In addition to this, class and subject teachers set more specific targets, often weekly or for the duration of a topic. Their own records show that pupils achieve well in relation to these targets. There is no whole school system for monitoring pupils' progress against individual targets. This means that there is no single source of information about the achievement of pupils in relation to their individual targets. As a result, the school relies very much on professional judgement to gauge the relative progress of different groups of pupils. This intuition is good but it is not providing precise information, for instance about the relative achievement of boys and girls or groups of pupils with differing degrees of learning difficulty. The inspection team, nevertheless, felt that there was no significant difference in the achievement of any group of pupils in the main school but that children in the Foundation Stage get off to a particularly good start.

3. The best achievement is in English and information and communication technology, because the school is particularly successful in blending these two subjects to greatly enhance pupils' literacy and communication skills. Achievement is good in mathematics, science, religious education and personal, social and health education. At the moment, however, the school is struggling to compensate for the loss of its specialist art and design teacher. The effect of this is clearly evident in Years 7 to 11, where pupils are not being inspired to achieve well and as a result standards have declined over the past year.

#### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are excellent. Attendance and punctuality are good.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**



- The excellent attitudes and behaviour displayed by pupils make a significant contribution to their achievement
- Personal development, through the promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural values, is excellent

**Commentary**

4. The school is an orderly, welcoming community. Pupils try their hardest in lessons and are proud of their achievements. The prospect of learning excites them, for example when tackling new software in information technology, or pretending to be French weather forecasters. Pupils have very positive attitudes and overcome obstacles to learning and mobility with determination and humour. Behaviour, in and out of lessons is exemplary. Pupils are self-disciplined, patient and tolerant with each other. They are respectful and welcoming to visitors. Lunchtime is a pleasant social occasion, occasionally noisy, but only because pupils are enjoying each other's company and sharing conversations. In the playground pupils happily play or talk together, sharing equipment without argument in a very inclusive atmosphere. There are many absences for medical reasons but pupils attend whenever possible and there is no unauthorised absence. There have been no exclusions in recent years

**Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	13.5	School data	0
National data	N/A	National data	N/A

*The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

5. Pupils know that they are valued and quickly grow in self esteem and self confidence. They are given many opportunities to explore the beliefs and traditions of other people and learn the importance of treating them with respect. Pupils visit a wide variety of places of worship, and have a good relationship with the local minister. On his visit, pupils showed great respect when handling religious artefacts and asked perceptive questions with great interest in the replies. Success is exuberantly celebrated in assemblies and in lessons. Pupils have clear moral values and are quick to speak out against injustice or infringements of rights. Excellent relationships within the school prepare pupils exceptionally well for a wide range of social situations. Activities such as the Kielder Challenge, the Communications Group and the social inclusion link with a local school provide pupils with many valuable opportunities to mix with people beyond their immediate school community, including a trip to France.

6. As they move through the school, pupils take on more responsibility. By Year 11, they not only carry out their own regular duties but also take over those of absent friends without any need for prompting. Two older boys regularly set up lunchtime computer activities for younger pupils. Pupils on door duty, welcome everybody individually and with enthusiasm, as they arrive at school.

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The school provides a good quality of education

**Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are good. Assessment is satisfactory.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have developed a high degree of expertise in using technology for the benefit of pupils.
- There is very good teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants
- Pupils' basic skills are very well promoted in a wide range of lessons
- Assessment in the main subjects is good but it is weaker in several other subjects

## Commentary

7. Staff confidently supervise a huge range of specialist equipment. This varies from laptop computers, which many pupils use with great independence to help record and organise their work, to much more specialist equipment such as 'VOCAs' which are aids for pupils who cannot talk. Laptop computers are frequently personalised, for instance by pupils having memory sticks which contain selected vocabulary, or which have been loaded with special software, particularly suited to an individual. Teachers make very good use of interactive whiteboards, which pupils can touch to make selections, for instance, matching pictures to descriptions of weather in a Year 8 French lesson. There has been huge improvement in this aspect of teaching since the previous inspection.

8. It is always uppermost in staffs' minds to seek ways of helping pupils to communicate their learning. Teaching assistants often play a very large part in this, often working intuitively and skilfully with those pupils who have the greatest degree of difficulty to ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities to learn and express themselves. Teaching assistants are also very effectively used to help supervise small groups of pupils, such as in a Year 8 mathematics lesson where their additional support helped pupils of widely differing ability to learn about algebra and in a physical activity lesson for nursery children, where their support helped ensure safety and involvement in activities that the children were clearly excited by. Close teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants means that pupils are always being encouraged to try harder and join in with as many activities as possible.

9. Teachers show a very good understanding of the benefits of promoting pupils' basic skills in as many situations as possible. Teachers' planning frequently identifies ways that literacy or numeracy skills can be taught in lessons other than English and mathematics, for instance by pupils measuring growth rate in science, counting beats in music or reading and writing in religious education. The use of computers is very well planned for in many lessons and this contributes significantly to pupils' confident use of them and ensuing very high standards in information and communication technology.

10. Assessment in the main subjects of the curriculum is good but it is less well developed in several minor subjects. This means that whilst teachers have a good understanding of how pupils are progressing in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology the picture is cloudier in subjects such as art, geography, history and religious education. Because classes are small and teachers have a very good understanding of pupils, they are able to set pupils appropriate work but without more formal assessment procedures, the school does not have access to sufficient information for evaluating any differences in provision in these subjects.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 48 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4(8%)	13(27%)	18(38%)	13(27%)	0	0	0

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.*

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum is good. It is well enriched. Accommodation and resources are good overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- It is well balanced and appropriate to pupils' needs, with language, mathematics and computing skills being very well supported in other lessons.
- There are good opportunities for older pupils to gain national certificates in their final year.
- The curriculum is well enriched by additional opportunities, good resources and specialist people.

### **Commentary**

11. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements. It puts a good emphasis on the major areas of language and communication skills, personal and social skills and mathematics. The use of computers and other technological aids in all subjects is particularly well planned for. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is especially good, with all Areas of Learning very well planned and interlinked.

12. Almost all subjects lead, eventually, to nationally recognised awards. These are mostly Asdan (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network). Pupils are well prepared for the courses they will be taking at college, such as English and mathematics G.C.S.E. Good careers' education includes opportunities for pupils to observe people such as the secretary, kitchen staff and caretaker at work. Pupils leaving the Foundation Stage are very carefully prepared for moving into the bigger groups of the main school and each subsequent move to an older stage is carefully managed to ensure that there is no interruption to progress.

13. Many activities take pupils out of the classroom and broaden their learning experiences. This represents considerable improvement since the previous inspection. Many visits to museums, galleries and leisure centres are well linked to pupils' learning in lessons. Pupils take part in swimming and sports galas and there is a good range of lunchtime clubs, sports and games. A recent music production led to a group of pupils putting on a successful performance at the Whitley Bay Playhouse. Day and residential visits to education and adventure centres at Kielder, France and Keswick have been extremely beneficial to pupils' social development, independence and confidence, as well as their skills in physical activities.

14. Teaching and classroom support staff are well qualified and carefully deployed to take good advantage of their skills, experience and preferences. There are specialist teachers for all the main subjects and support staff also have good qualifications in particular areas such as health and safety, swimming, movement therapy on the trampoline, and computing. Therapy, nursing, administration and premises staff all offer valuable support to the smooth running of the school and aiding pupils' progress. The satisfactory accommodation is well used in the main. Only design and technology suffers from a lack of good facilities, which adversely affects the progress pupils can make in working with some materials. The many very good resources are imaginatively used to promote pupils' progress.

### **Care, guidance and support**

Provision for ensuring pupils care, welfare health and safety is excellent. Support and guidance for pupils is very good and pupils are very well involved in the work of the school.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Procedures for child protection are excellent
- The school places a very high priority on ensuring pupils is cared for and feel safe.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are excellent
- The school council gives pupils a voice on the work of the school.

## **Commentary**

15. For parents, the high standard of care and concern for pupils' welfare is a real strength of the school. Parents feel that the school develops the 'whole person' very well based on the excellent relationships between staff and pupils. Inspection evidence supports this view. The school has established comprehensive procedures to ensure pupils welfare. All staff know and understand the procedures for child protection which are excellently managed by the head teacher.

16. Very good procedures for children starting in the nursery ensure they settle in quickly. The excellent relationships throughout the school enable staff to give pupils clear, explicit advice to support them on a personal level. As a result, pupils feel happy and safe in school; they know who to speak to if they have a problem and are confident that they will be listened to. Support staff play a vital and highly effective role in this work.

17. The school has very good procedures to involve pupils in its work. It goes to great lengths to help pupils overcome personal communication difficulties, allowing all to take a full part in expressing their views and to be heard. More formal situations such as the School Council and tutorial groups also provide valuable opportunities for pupils to contribute to the development of the school. A current project, suggested by pupils, is the creation of a peaceful garden area where they can sit and chat away from footballers and rowdier activities.

## **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

There are very good links with parents, the community and other schools.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school is very well regarded in the local community.
- The school works extremely well with parents and encourages them to be fully involved in their children's learning
- There are very good links with the other schools in the area.

## **Commentary**

18. The school has created a strong partnership with parents. Parents are very supportive of the school and appreciate the quality of education and care provided for their children. Parents expressed their full support for the school in the questionnaires and at the parents' meeting prior to the inspection. The school takes seriously, and deals effectively, with any concerns voiced by parents. There is a very active Parents' and Friends' Association that raises funds for the school and provides a range of social activities. Parents are informed of their children's academic progress at regular consultation meetings and through a detailed written report in the summer term. They are also invited to attend annual reviews of their children's progress where they can meet the various professionals involved in their child's welfare.

19. The very good links with the community contribute to the wide range of visits and visitors which enhances pupils' learning. For many years, the school has hosted an annual 'Boxing Day Run' and a summer fair, both of which have become major events in the local community. These events are very well supported and as well as raising funds for school and community projects they raise the profile of the school and help the broader public understand its work. The school has also been successful in encouraging a national firm in helping to sponsor its new garden.

20. There are very good links with the other schools in the area. Primary aged pupils visit the first school on the adjacent site for various lessons and senior pupils join with their peers at the local secondary team to complete in the Keilder Challenge, a team building competition. These activities mean that many pupils get very good opportunities to enhance their learning and involvement in schools other than their own. In addition to this, senior pupils from other schools, visiting Woodlawn regularly to help in activities as part of their own studies and personal development.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school are good. The leadership of the head teacher is very good. The governance of the school is good and the governing body ensures that statutory requirements are met.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Leadership by the head teacher is very good. He is well supported by the senior management team
- The governing body provides good strategic management
- The systems for school self review are developing well
- The monitoring and analysis of pupils' progress is underdeveloped

### **Commentary**

21. The head teacher has successfully maintained the high reputation of the school and has a very clear vision for its future development. He has been very effective in motivating his staff. Under his leadership teachers have been well supported in taking increased responsibility for the development of the curriculum and staff share the head teacher's drive to raise the achievement of each pupil. The school has established a national reputation for the way independent learning has been improved through the use of augmentative communication aids.

22. An efficient senior team of experienced staff contribute a wide range of skills and expertise to the school's management. The team works effectively because responsibilities are carefully shared. Senior staff meet together regularly and contribute to the clear level of strategic planning. Management decisions are realistic and based solidly on sound knowledge of the staff and pupils. An effective school improvement plan has been created. This appropriately prioritises further development and emphasises the strong links between the management team and teaching staff by incorporating the action planning of each curriculum co-ordinator.

23. The governing body is very supportive of the head teacher and shares his vision for the development of the school. Members maintain an active oversight and a good understanding of the priorities for improvement. Several parents serve on the governing body and bring a deep understanding of the needs of pupils and how effectively the school is dealing with them. Governors are well informed by the head teacher and they are confident in challenging and supporting the leadership of the school. The governors and head teacher have successfully resolved a budget deficit by rationalising staffing costs but plans for the statutory reform of the work force are not fully developed. There are appropriate procedures to ensure best value in purchases and services.

**Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005**

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	921549
Total expenditure	930454
Expenditure per pupil	12242

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	31505
Balance carried forward to the next	22600

24. Management is good. Senior staff have recently developed a very effective system of self review which has helped to establish a rigorous cycle of monitoring of subject management, teaching and learning, standards and the quality of the curriculum. The monitoring is linked to the school's development planning and adds clarity to the school's longer term objectives. The system very effectively includes the management of the performance of staff. Subject co-ordinators have responded well to the responsibility of developing the curriculum and holding a department budget.

25. The monitoring and analysis of pupils' progress remains underdeveloped. The school's management is well aware of this and has prepared appropriate plans for improvement. The assessment of pupils' progress in the main subjects of the curriculum is good, but less so in other areas. The assessments are not presently co-ordinated satisfactorily and the school is unable to track the performance and progress of different groups of pupils or to efficiently report this to parents.

## PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

### AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The provision in the Foundation Stage is **very good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make very good progress, and achieve very well in key areas of learning.
- Good teaching is based on clear, well-focused planning.
- The leadership and management are very good.

#### Commentary

26. Most children are Nursery age, and attend part-time in the assessment unit. A very few children of Reception age are taught alongside older children in the next class up. Many children have very severe learning difficulties, and enter the unit with a very low level of attainment. However, their introduction is very well managed, and their long term progress soon becomes very good in the major areas of language development, personal and social skills, and their understanding of the world around them. Their progress and achievements in the other areas of learning are good. Staff are very good at assessing how well children are developing, and at using the information in deciding what will be taught in future lessons. Children's learning is so good because the teaching is good, and often very good. It is based on clear planning that very often combines different areas together so that several skills are developed during the one lesson. The curriculum is very good: all areas of learning are well covered. In the older class, the plans for what is to be taught in the long term show clear differences for each age group.

27. A long serving teacher has been newly appointed to lead the Nursery unit. Her leadership is very good She has valuable assistance from other senior staff, and from the support staff within the unit who work as a very effective team with the teacher. When children are old enough to leave the unit, their move to other provisions is very well managed. Some children go to mainstream schools, following their very good links with possible schools during their time in the unit. Others may need to go to other special schools because of their additional needs, and some will move into the main classes in Woodlawn School. High quality reporting helps the move to go smoothly, and within Woodlawn School, children spend time in the higher class, and some lessons are shared. The school has maintained this high quality of education well since the previous inspection.

28. The two main areas of learning that the teaching concentrates on are **personal, social and emotional development**, and **language and communication skills**. Children learn to sit and pay attention, to share with each other, to be friendly with each other, and to begin to look after themselves. They listen to what they are told, and understand the pictures and symbols they are shown. The more able children begin to make meaningful marks that precede writing and drawing, and they use pencils, crayons and brushes in doing this. Staff are very good at organising and teaching separate activities to develop children's skills in each area. They are equally good at introducing targets in these areas into other activities such as snack times, lunch and playtimes. This all-day reinforcement of these basic skills is what makes children's progress so good.

29. **Mathematical** skills are developed well. Staff work very well together in introducing numbers and concepts (such as big, full, square and yellow) into many activities such as water play, singing, building with wooden blocks, and playing with toy animals. Numeracy lessons are a good combination of number songs and rhymes, counting toy fishes, fat sausages and speckled frogs. The most able children learn some colours and shapes, and recognise the numerals to five by the time they leave the unit. In their **knowledge and understanding of the world**, children make very good progress because the teaching is lively and imaginative. It covers a wide range of topics, and is planned to reinforce and extend children's social and communication skills. Children learn, for example about floating and sinking things; using the mouse or the computer touch screen; and other

people doing jobs around the school, running the local café, or having Chinese New Year celebrations. Their **creative skills** are well encouraged in many very enjoyable activities such as using paints, textiles, playdough, musical instruments, toys and dressing up clothes. Children also develop their speaking and listening skills, and their ability to share with a friend, and to take turns, in these activities. They begin to sing, to make musical sounds, and to make patterns and pictures. In their **physical development**, some children make very good progress, having come into the unit with very little free movement, or poor muscle control. With physiotherapy help, well-organised outdoor play, soft play, and indoor physical activities using the apparatus in the hall, they are very well helped to become mobile and often confident when running, kicking a ball or balancing along a beam.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1, 2, 3 and 4**

### **ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

#### **English**

The provision for English is **very good**

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve very well because teaching is imaginative and very effective
- Use of communication aids and information technology makes an outstanding contribution to achievement
- Leadership and management are very effective and pupils gain appropriate accreditation

#### **Commentary**

30. Achievement is very good for pupils of all ages and abilities. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. Very good or excellent teaching was observed in many English lessons. Lessons are exciting and imaginative, very well planned and delivered with enthusiasm and humour. Teachers know their pupils very well and work is well matched to individual needs and abilities. Lessons are very well structured to include opportunities for speaking and listening, reading and writing. There is a clear presentation of learning objectives at the beginning of lessons, and good evaluation at the end. Younger pupils are encouraged to contribute to the lesson through carefully targeted questions. In Years 1 to 6 pupils are introduced to a wide variety of texts through 'Big Books' in the literacy hour. These include fiction, non-fiction and poetry. Reading is monitored and recorded and shows that pupils make at least good and often very good progress. Writing activities are graded from sequencing and copying to free writing, retelling a story. Older pupils join in discussions, listening well and responding with confidence. Secondary pupils study plays, including Shakespeare, stories and poems. Pupils learn to write for a wide variety of purposes such as letter writing, script writing, story telling, and the production of a Curriculum Vitae. They learn skills such as note taking, drafting, research and word processing.

31. Computers and the interactive whiteboard are used very well to make lessons more exciting and motivating. Communication aids provide equal and very effective access to the curriculum. The most outstanding feature of the use of information and communication technology is that it is simply another classroom resource and does not replace the focus of the lesson. The great skill and knowledge of teachers and teaching assistants makes this possible. Specific vocabulary, word banks, writing frames and speech facilities are transferred or changed, and special switches or keyboards attached so quietly and efficiently that they never distract from the lesson objectives. Pupils are very skilled in using technology and will communicate with an electronic aid while word processing on a laptop. The support of the Communication Co-ordinator and the Information Technology Co-ordinator has ensured that pupils have the most appropriate access devices for example one pupil uses her feet and another operates a head switch. The provision of the correct tools makes it possible for teachers to challenge all pupils and maintain high expectations of both



work and independence. There has been very good improvement in this area since the previous inspection.

32. The co-ordinators have a clear vision of their subject, honest self-evaluation, and very good forward planning. They work together very well, have produced comprehensive schemes of work for a broad and balanced curriculum, and set an excellent example with the quality of their teaching. A file of levelled work, a set of assessment tasks, very constructive marking and a good recording system contribute to well-informed planning. Monitoring of planning and teaching, including monitoring of literacy in other curriculum subjects is in place and effective. Pupils work towards the most appropriate level of accreditation for their level of ability. Files of work are impressive, showing the path from notes to first draft to well presented finished work.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

33. Literacy skills are very well promoted in subjects other than English. The Communications Co-ordinator makes a significant contribution by making sure that communication aids are provided with the necessary vocabulary for pupils to be able to participate fully in lessons. Lessons in most subjects are planned to include good opportunities for speaking and listening, reading and writing.

### **French**

34. Insufficient evidence was collected to make an overall judgement on provision.

35. French is taught to pupils from Year 7 to Year 11. The emphasis is on an oral approach but there are also opportunities for reading and writing. The two lessons observed, analysis of files and CD recordings of pupils' speaking and listening indicate that pupils achieve very well. Teaching was very good or excellent in the fast paced, exciting lessons. High expectations were well fulfilled as pupils responded confidently to greetings, questions and instructions. Pupils remember vocabulary well and speak in sentences. They are learning to pick out sufficient significant words and phrases in printed material to understand, for example, an advertising leaflet. Similarly, they can understand French, spoken at normal pace, using context to fill in the gaps in vocabulary. Very good use of information technology enhanced teaching, and pupils enjoyed playing French snakes and ladders on the interactive whiteboard. Using the internet to find a French website to check the weather, was followed by a very impressive weather report given in French, in front of a map of France, by several pupils in Years 7 and 8. Pupils are enthusiastic and can be heard using French phrases out of lessons. The specialist room creates a good atmosphere for teaching French and the informative displays are used well by pupils to refresh their memories when searching for a word or phrase. Information about French culture and traditions is fully integrated into lessons.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision for mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum and planning is very good
- There is good teaching throughout the school
- Leadership and management of the subject is good
- The assessment and recording of pupils' progress is variable in its effectiveness

### **Commentary**

36. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers make very good use of the national strategies for mathematics and this has ensured rigour and focus to the pupils' learning. The curriculum is very well constructed and reflects the full breadth and balance of the National Curriculum. As a result the achievement of pupils is good throughout the school. By the end of Year 2, for instance, most pupils are able to count in twos and fives and to read and write

numbers to 20. By the end of Year 6 the higher attaining pupils add, subtract and multiply to 20, measure in centimetres and give change for one pound. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils, for example, pupils in Year 6 learned about complex three dimensional shapes such as a pyramid and different types of cuboids and made good progress in classifying shapes by the number of sides and corners. By Year 9 some higher attaining pupils approach nationally expected levels of attainment. In an effective lesson, the pupils in year 9 increased their understanding of right angles and learned how to identify acute and obtuse angles, firstly in simple diagrams and then in relatively complex two dimensional shapes. All pupils are able to follow examination courses in Years 10 and 11 leading to nationally accredited Certificates of Achievement or in some cases intermediate GCSE level.

37. Planning is very good. Teachers in all classes use a clear structure which has built-in adaptations of learning objectives and activities to take account of the wide range of pupils' abilities. Teaching assistants are well briefed and provide a good level of support to small groups and individuals. Where possible the teachers extend the pupils' knowledge and understanding through additional work which is carefully linked to progression through the curriculum.

38. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are characterised by good relationships between teacher and pupils. Teaching is occasionally very good in Years 7 to 11, where the teacher is a specialist with very good subject knowledge. Pupils respond very well to the brisk pace of activities. They concentrate well on their work and many have gained the confidence to discuss and suggest alternative answers to questions. Pupils in Year 11, for instance, who were engaged in learning about the use of calendars, were able to pose questions about Leap Years and about predicting the number of school days in a month. They confidently discussed their ideas and opinions with the teacher and with other classmates.

39. The assessment of pupils' progress is thorough but is very time consuming and does not take enough account of the whole mathematics curriculum. The assessment structure concentrates too heavily on the acquisition of number skills and there is insufficient assessment of the pupils' ability to generalise their knowledge. Teachers use several assessment systems to record the pupils' progress. The systems are not co-ordinated and there is both duplication and omission in recording the pupils' achievements. Teachers supplement formal assessment however, by exemplary informal weekly recording of the pupils' activities and progress.

40. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinators of primary and secondary provision work together well. The curriculum is progressive and ensures continuity between primary and secondary teaching. The co-ordinators have prepared accurate and relevant audits of provision within the subject and effective action plans for development. Resources are good and efficiently linked to curriculum planning.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

41. There are good opportunities for pupils to extend their mathematical knowledge in other subjects and many examples were seen during the inspection. Pupils often count distances or estimate in physical education lessons. In history pupils have questioned children and adults about their knowledge of the Armada and produced interesting graphs of the results. Mathematical work has been promoted in geography where pupils made comparative graphs of wealth and diet in England and Kenya. Lessons in history, geography and physical education are often characterised by specific planning for mathematical activities. Pupils have also gained useful knowledge of shapes, measurement and pattern in science and ICT.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and many gain good qualifications
- Scientific enquiry is a weaker area of study in Years 7 to 11
- Teaching is good
- The subject is well led and managed

### Commentary

42. Pupils achieve well. They start at a very low level but quickly make progress in Years 1 to 6. The curriculum is good, giving pupils opportunities to make even progress in biology, chemistry and physics. At the end of Year 9, pupils are averaging Level 3 in statutory tests. By the time they leave, many are gaining passes in Entry Level examinations, usually at Level 3, but a few at Level 2. Most of the lower attaining pupils gain Unit Awards. In Years 7 to 11, the best achievement is in topics relating to biology; this is the pupils' favourite part of science and is also the strongest area of teaching. Scientific enquiry is only satisfactory with pupils being given limited opportunities to predict outcomes of experiments and designing their own fair tests. This is the main obstacle to higher achievement.

43. Teaching is good. Many lessons have an encouraging buzz of productivity. Year 4 pupils, when learning about what plants need to grow well, were clearly excited as they measured how much their sunflower seeds had grown since the previous lesson. The recording of growth also made a good contribution to improving their numeracy skills. In this lesson, careful attention to presenting pupils of different ability enabled all of them to record their findings with as much independence as possible. In another good lesson, for Year 9 pupils, the teacher used the interactive whiteboard very effectively as she checked what pupils had remembered from their previous lesson. It was clear that they had remembered a lot about inherited and environmental characteristics. Support in all lessons is good and well focused to help all pupils achieve to the best of their ability. Less successful teaching relies too much on older pupils completing worksheets. Here they learn scientific facts, but there is insufficient stimulus to make learning memorable or fun.

44. Leadership and management are good and they have led to good improvements since the last inspection. Pupils' progress is monitored through accurate and regular checking of pupils' work and through end of topic tests. The curriculum is well planned to ensure that lessons are varied and meet the needs of individuals. Resources are good and the laboratory is adequate. The coordinator takes pride in presenting pupils' work in the best light possible. Feedback from the external assessor of examination coursework commented on the 'excellent set of portfolios, well organised, well presented and clearly annotated, with the use of digital cameras to enhance evidence of outcomes. In summary, a fabulous set of work which was a pleasure to mark.'

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The provision for information and communication technology is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very high expectations, knowledge and skill of the staff give pupils the confidence to achieve very well
- The provision of equipment to meet the individual needs of pupils allows equal access to the curriculum in this and other subjects
- Very effective leadership and management makes provision for ICT consistent and relevant

## **Commentary**

45. Pupils of all ages achieve very well because lessons are challenging, well paced and build skills and understanding. ICT is taught by class teachers in the primary classes and pupils build skills which are well assessed and recorded. Year 5 and 6 pupils demonstrated good understanding of technology, as well as keyboard and mouse skills, in a very good lesson on manipulating sound. The provision of user friendly software supports non-specialist teachers and promotes independence for pupils. In Years 7 to 9 pupils benefit from very good specialist teaching and achieve very well. Year 7 pupils have created an animated slide show to be used in the Nursery using new software. They are able to transfer skills learned on other programmes such as the use of text boxes, clipart, Wordart and interactive buttons. By Year 9 pupils have again transferred their skills; this time to the software used by most adults for word processing, publishing and presentation. In an excellent lesson in Year 9 pupils created a multi-media page in Powerpoint. They use correct terminology, clearly understand the functions of various parts of the computer system as well as recognising the icons which operate the tasks within the programme. In Years 10 and 11 there is more emphasis on using the skills they have acquired, in a range of subjects, but also working towards the most appropriate accreditation, Entry Level, units of accreditation or ASDAN.

46. There is excellent teamwork between the ICT co-ordinator, Communications co-ordinator, speech therapists and teachers to assess the needs of individual pupils. This results in the provision of the most appropriate individual communication aids. In addition, staff have been trained to use Clicker and Wordbar so that, with the support of the team, resources can be provided to help pupils to express themselves in writing more effectively. Access to the computer for all pupils is achieved by the very good provision of suitable switches or keyboards.

47. The subject is very well managed and pupils benefit from the co-ordinator's many links and contacts in the field of ICT. Very good curriculum planning, schemes of work and assessment procedures lead to a consistent approach to teaching ICT throughout the school, reflected in the pupils' very good achievement. There has been considerable improvement since the previous inspection.

## **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

48. Very good use of computers, interactive whiteboards, the internet, and electronic communication aids was seen during the inspection in most subjects. Their use in the teaching of English is spectacular.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Geography and History**

The provision in geography and history is good in the senior part of the school. No lessons were seen in the younger half of the school so no overall judgement of provision has been made.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The two subjects are well combined throughout the school.
- Good teaching is the result of good planning and very good preparation.
- There is too little coordination of provision through the school.

## **Commentary**

49. Pupils make good progress, and achieve well in both subjects. They learn about, for instance, coastal erosion and the landforms that are created, as part of their geography, and at the same time are having very well linked lessons about the history of holidays by the sea. They learn how to look at maps, landscapes and built-up areas, and have good trips into the local area to see for

themselves – such as going to the beach, a castle, a museum, over the ferry, a farm, reservoir and forest.

50. All of the teaching observed was good. Lessons are planned thoroughly, with very good resources made by the teacher. Pupils learn well because teaching is interesting, lively, and uses different approaches during a lesson, such as discussions, a video, computers, copies of very old pictures and documents, and maps and posters. However, the timing of lessons is occasionally a weakness, with activities over-running, and lessons not being fully completed.

51. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Secondary aged pupils are taught by a specialist teacher. They follow very appropriate nationally recognised courses that lead to certificates awarded by independent or government agencies. In the lower part of the school each class teacher does their own planning and assessment. The resources are good, well organised and well used in helping pupils to learn. Teachers go to a lot of effort to structure pupils' work and learning so that they have many valuable opportunities to practise and broaden their writing, reading, mathematics and computer skills in lessons. Standards have been satisfactorily maintained since the previous inspection.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Provision for Religious Education is **good**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum is good and makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and moral development
- There are no secure assessment procedures to show how pupils progress as they move through the school
- Leadership and management are good

### **Commentary**

52. Careful thought has been given to the way that Religious Education, based on the locally agreed syllabus, is introduced and developed for pupils of different ages and attainments. This has resulted in a good scheme of work being developed. It helps to reinforce the excellent ethos of the school and is used well to encourage pupils to learn about, share and respect each other's views. Pupils' work demonstrates that they think deeply about the issues and achieve well over their time at school. By the end of year 6 pupils know about Christian and other festivals and ceremonies and have learned about the important symbols of different faiths. They learn about Sikhism and Judaism and the different places of worship. During Years 7 to 11 pupils are gradually introduced to wider and deeper questions of morality and religious belief. For example in a Year 8 lesson pupils gave serious consideration to how Jesus would act in certain situations and how they would personally react in situations which they thought unjust. By Year 11, pupils have learned about prejudice and segregation through studying the life of Martin Luther King and have considered the meaning of suffering, through work on 'The Holocaust'. The syllabus takes appropriate account of respect for the beliefs of others and is securely linked to pupils' other work in citizenship and humanities.

53. Teaching and learning are good overall. In the best lessons the pupils are presented with clear information and encouraged by a high standard of questions to give their opinion and to consider the opinions of others. Planning is good and therefore lessons proceed at a brisk pace. Expectations of the pupils are high and the pupils respond well. They maintain a good level of interest and all pupils feel confident to contribute to discussions. This is especially beneficial in motivating pupils with communication difficulties and those who use augmentative aids. There is as yet no formal assessment in Religious Education. The co-ordinators are aware of this and are seeking to develop ways of demonstrating pupils' progress. The co-ordinators compensate somewhat for the lack of assessment by maintaining very clear records of the work they have covered, but rightly recognise that this is not the same thing as recording what pupils have learned

54. The leadership and management of the subject is good. The co-ordinators have a good level of subject knowledge and have developed an effective curriculum. The pupils are able to visit a variety of places of worship, especially the local church. The co-ordinators have developed sound curriculum links with history, geography and citizenship and these help pupils to understand concepts and the context of their work in Religious Education. Pupils for instance are linking their learning about 'Christian Aid Week' to work on Africa.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

55. One art and design lesson was observed but no full lessons of either design and technology or music were observed. No overall judgement of provision is made in these three subjects.

### **Art and design**

56. The one art and design lesson that was observed was very good. In it a class of Year 3 and 4 pupils explored how different artists have used nature as a source of inspiration. The lesson started well with a very good recapitulation of what pupils had been learning about. Their excited and perceptive responses to the teacher's very good questioning made it very clear that pupils had remembered most of what they had been previously taught and were keen to carry on. Throughout the lesson, the development of observational skills was strongly promoted as pupils compared their own interpretations of nature with those of famous artists such as William Morris or Matisse. Computers were very well used to help pupils to generate images incorporating imaginative and creative use of colour and shape. Pupils' past work shows that in Years 1 to 6, they are making good progress in developing their artistic skills and learning about the work of many famous artists.

57. The work of pupils in Years 7 to 11 does not show the same progress. Pupils' files suggest that the curriculum here is more sterile. Too much of the work is illustration or colouring in. Drawings from life are uninspiring, showing little use of any medium other than pencil or crayon. Many pieces of work are on small sheets of white paper, giving pupils little opportunity to express or develop their creativity. Pupils' portfolios of work are ill put together and give very little evidence of progress. There are many inspiring pieces of artwork on display around the school and individual pupils have, until recently, achieved considerable success. The problem is that the school has not succeeded in replacing its specialist art and design teacher and in the meantime the subject in Years 7 to 11 is not being led or managed effectively.

### **Design and Technology**

58. It is not possible to judge the overall quality of provision because no lessons were seen. Records and displays indicate that pupils enjoy their lessons very much throughout the school, and make satisfactory progress in the areas in which they learn. The planning includes work with textiles and resistant materials, although the emphasis is more on food technology – cooking, hygiene and safety in the home and commercially. Some very good use is made of computers and other high-technology equipment to help pupils' learning. The unsatisfactory accommodation limits pupils' experiences in learning about working with wood, plastic and metal and keeps these studies at a basic level. This is especially noticeable for the older pupils.

### **Music**

59. Music is enthusiastically and very effectively led and managed. The curriculum is carefully planned to ensure that all pupils are taught a wide range of musical skills and have many opportunities to express themselves musically and to learn about the work of famous musicians, both from the past and present. A tremendous amount of thought has been put into making music an enjoyable and fulfilling experience. The use of technology has been carefully researched and it is very well used to help pupils make and explore sounds and record them. By using equipment that converts information about movement and distance into sound (Sound Beam) even pupils with the greatest degree of difficulty are able to join in with lessons. A strong feature of music is its

relevance. Pupils are learning how to make the music that appeals to their generation. They use commercial software, computers and digital decks to select samples of sounds which they then use to 'mix' their own tunes. Pupils' views are rigorously sought. Year 11 pupils, for instance, have completed a self-evaluation of their progress and been asked what they would like to do more of. They have identified which digital music packages they enjoy using and have been asked if they prefer electronic to traditional music.

## **Physical Education**

The provision in physical education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils of all ability levels make good progress, and achieve well.
- Good, well-planned teaching motivates pupils' learning.
- A broad and relevant range of subjects is taught, including opportunities outside the school.

### **Commentary**

60. Whatever their ability, pupils make good progress in each part of the school, and in each of the areas of physical activity in which they take part. Less able pupils learn, for instance, to crawl through a tunnel, to walk up a ramp and jump onto a padded mat. They begin to splash around confidently in the pool, and play simple versions of games. More able pupils learn to swim independently, play football, and use the trampoline competently.

61. Good teaching is to be seen throughout the school. Lessons are mainly planned well to include and challenge all pupils. Teachers and support staff are good at motivating pupils to try hard, and to learn how to enjoy their physical activities, whether they are mobile or in a wheelchair. Sometimes, however, a few reluctant pupils are not given enough encouragement to become well involved in activities such as swimming and gymnastics.

62. The new teacher responsible for this subject has done well to maintain standards of planning and learning since the previous inspection, when there was a specialist teacher in charge. The leadership is satisfactory, but divided, as the coordinator is not responsible for pupils up to Year 2, and above Year 9. No one is currently monitoring the quality of the teaching, or the planning throughout the school, but overall management is otherwise good. Pupils' progress is not formally well recorded, but teachers have a good idea "in their heads" of how well pupils are developing. The additional provision is good, with regular groups going out to a sports centre and a leisure centre nearby, for swimming and other recreational activities. Also, groups go to outdoor centres at Kielder and the Lake District for adventurous pursuits, archery, riding and climbing.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

Provision for personal, health and social education (PSHE) is **good**. Provision for citizenship is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum for PSHE and citizenship is good and covers all statutory areas of study
- The provision is well led and managed

### **Commentary**

63. Scrutiny of planning, pupils' work and teachers' records shows that overall, pupils make good progress. The curriculum is clearly linked to the national guidance. Teachers have planned units of work which ensure breadth and balance in the curriculum and which provide for progression in pupils' maturity and understanding of issues as they move up the school. Pupils in each year are

able to learn at a suitable level about the dangers of drugs and alcohol. The curriculum for teaching about sex and relationships is sensitive to pupils' awareness and feelings and is properly conducted by the teachers and school nurse.

64. Pupils in years 7 to 11 follow a well balanced course in citizenship, which is carefully linked to work in PHSE and in humanities. Teaching is good overall. Teachers plan clearly to develop pupils' understanding of issues in such topics as 'looking after yourself' and 'Bullying'. Planning for lessons includes a high proportion of discussion. Pupils are encouraged to examine their own opinions and to make informed choices about their conduct. By asking and answering questions and expressing their opinions the pupils are also encouraged to develop their independence and their language skills. By Year 11 pupils are familiar with issues about pollution and energy saving and have learned about the processes of democracy. Teachers effectively plan units of history and religious education to develop concepts such as living in a community and understanding the rights and responsibilities of individuals.

65. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator is a specialist and has recently completed further advanced study. She has worked effectively with colleagues to provide clear policies in the statutory areas of sex and relationships education and in anti-bullying strategies and health education. The school has been accredited for the 'Healthy Schools' award for a number of years and teachers have been praised by assessors for their curriculum planning. The co-ordinator has prepared a recent audit of provision within the subjects and an effective improvement plan which put the school in a good position to improve further

### **Work related learning**

Provision for work related learning (WRL) is **good**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a good curriculum
- There are effective links with Connexions and other providers
- Vocational work is well managed but needs development
- Provision for work experience is underdeveloped

### **Commentary**

66. The curriculum for WRL effectively combines activities in careers education with vocational courses and with the contribution made by the Connexions service. Teachers have developed a good course in careers education. Pupils are able to develop appropriate skills and to gain understanding of some of the choices available to them when they leave school. The pupils follow structured progressive units of study in Year 11 and learn about the world of work and about health and safety in the workplace. They learn important skills in filling out forms and writing their CV and they show interest in discussing and recording their thoughts on jobs they like or dislike. The pupils are given appropriate opportunities to visit local colleges and to visit industrial and business premises. The pupils have visited Rising Sun farm to look at the possibility of work in agriculture and farming and have spoken to the manager of the North Tyneside training centre.

67. There are very good relationships with the Connexions service. All pupils in Year 9 and again in Year 11 have individual and group interviews and are supported in making the necessary choices about their plans after school. A teacher from the school has planned this, trained the connexions advisor and developed the purposeful links. The pupils learn how to conduct themselves at interviews, for instance, the school's Connexions advisor, through role-play, very effectively showed Year 11 pupils how to present themselves in formal meetings with adults. The pupils responded very well. They were enthusiastic to discuss each aspect and to record their opinions and they made good progress. The school has established productive links with local colleges. Pupils attend taster courses and most school leavers follow appropriate further education foundation courses.



68. Provision is effectively linked to vocational ASDAN courses, in which pupils learn about aspects of work. The course is well organised and most pupils gain appropriate accreditation. In lessons observed, the pupils made satisfactory progress, for example, in understanding the practical problems of disabled people when travelling. They were helped to recall their fact-finding trip to the airport through good prompting by the teacher and by photographs of the occasion. In another lesson, pupils in year 11 learned about aspects of handling information. They discussed how to interview people to gain information and gained a satisfactory understanding of how to ask appropriate questions. The vocational curriculum does not however, effectively combine the key skills of communication, familiarity with number and ICT. The opportunities for pupils to personally experience the world of work are underdeveloped.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)</b>	<b>1</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	1
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	1
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	1
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

*Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).*